

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 AMMAN 06976

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, JO, US
SUBJECT: JORDANIAN ATTITUDES ON EVE OF CAMP DAVID SUMMIT

REF: AMMAN 6941(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: UNDERNEATH KING HUSSEIN'S PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CAMP DAVID SUMMIT LIES DEEP SKEPTICISM THAT SUMMIT RESULTS WILL SUFFICE TO PERMIT JORDAN'S ENTRY INTO NEGOTIATIONS.
HUSSEIN'S POSITION IS BASED ON PROFOUND BELIEF THAT BEGIN WILLING TO RISK ARAB HOSTILITY RATHER THAN CEDE OCCUPIED TERRITORY. BEGIN SELF-RULE PLAN IS SEEN AS CLEVER DEVICE TO AVOID WITHDRAWAL. JORDANIANS NOW FAIRLY SURE THAT SADAT WILL NOT ACCEPT SEPARATE PEACE, EVEN IN GUISE OF "PERMANENT PARTIAL PEACE." JORDANIANS NEVERTHELESS RETAIN FEAR THAT THEY WILL SOMEHOW BE MANEUVERED INTO PARTICIPATION BY SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS AND WILL RESIST ANY SUCH ATTEMPTS. THEY WILL EXAMINE CLOSELY ANY PRINCIPLES ON PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION AND PARTICULARLY WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL TO ENSURE THAT THEY CONTAIN DEMONSTRABLE PROMISE OF REAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. EAST BANK JORDANIANS CONTINUE RELUCTANT FOR JORDAN TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS; THEY SECRET

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BELIEVE IT COULD UPSET ECONOMY AND POLITICAL STABILITY. REPORTEDLY, PARTICULARLY PM BADRAN AND EVEN CINC BIN SHAKER MIGHT CONSIDER RESIGNING SHOULD KING DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE. SUBTLETIES OF NEGOTIATING ARE NOT WIDELY UNDERSTOOD HERE; KING WOULD HAVE TO COME UP WITH SOME VERY PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS TO CONVINCE CONSTITUENTS THAT ISRAELIS, FOR EXAMPLE, REALLY DO INTEND TO WITHDRAW AND GAINS TO ARABS ARE WORTH

RISKS TO JORDAN. DESPITE HIS PESSIMISM, KING WILL TRY TO KEEP UP PEACE MOMENTUM AFTER CAMP DAVID, BUT MAJOR EMPHASIS IS NOW ON EXPLORING "SAFETY NET" OF COLLECTIVE OR INTER-NATIONAL FORUM SUCH AS U. N. OR GENEVA ON HIS ASSUMPTION CAMP DAVID WILL NOT MAKE A BREAKTHROUGH. HUSSEIN DOES BELIEVE JORDAN HAS ROLE TO PLAY IN PEACE SETTLEMENT AND HE DOES REALIZE HIS ENTRY INTO NEGOTIATIONS WILL TAKE "AN ACT OF COURAGE." HE RETAINS ENOUGH OF AN ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT TO DO SO, BUT HIS POLITICAL SENSE TELLS HIM HE MUST PREPARE HIS PEOPLE WELL; CHOSE THE TIME CAREFULLY. MOST IMPORTANTLY, GIVEN HIS PERCEPTION OF CURRENT ISRAELI ATTITUDES, KING PROBABLY DOES NOT BELIEVE U. S. WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE THE DECISIVE PROGRESS AT CAMP DAVID, PARTICULARLY ON ISRAELI WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL OR PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION ISSUES TO JUSTIFY JORDAN'S JOINING THE NEGOTIATIONS. KING'S ULTIMATE DECISION, HOWEVER, WILL BE BASED ON HIS ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL STRATEGIC SITUATION EMERGING FROM THE CAMP DAVID TALKS. END SUMMARY.

1. FYI: THIS ASSESSMENT WAS DRAFTED PRIOR TO OUR RECEIPT AUGUST 28 OF KING HUSSEIN'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER GIVING DEFINITIVE JORDANIAN POSITION ON CAMP DAVID TALKS (REFTEL). EMBASSY NEVERTHELESS IS SUBMITTING THIS ASSESSMENT WHICH WE BELIEVE IS IN LINE WITH ANNOUNCED JORDANIAN POSITION AND PROVIDES ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON REASONS BEHIND EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS POSITION THAT JORDAN IS TAKING
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WITH REGARD TO CAMP DAVID TALKS AND OF THEIR PROVIDING A POSSIBLE BASIS FOR JORDAN TO JOIN NEGOTIATIONS.

2. KING SKEPTICAL: WHILE KING HUSSEIN HAS PUBLICLY SUPPORTED GENERAL IDEA OF CAMP DAVID SUMMIT, MOST OF OUR EVIDENCE SINCE THE LAST ATHERTON VISIT INDICATES THAT KING RETAINS DEEP SKEPTICISM THAT SUFFICIENT POSITIVE RESULTS WILL EMERGE ON KEY WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION ISSUES TO PERMIT JORDANIAN ENTRY INTO NEGOTIATIONS. KING HUSSEIN'S MENTAL STYLE IS TO LOOK AT THE STRATEGIC BASIS OF POLITICAL SITUATIONS RATHER THAN DAY-TO-DAY TACTICS, AND NOTHING HE SEES IN ISRAELI INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION OR OVERALL MIDEAST SITUATION LEADS HIM TO BELIEVE THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF A DRAMATIC ISRAELI CHANGE ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE. KING PROBABLY FUNDAMENTALLY DISAGREES WITH OUR ASSESSMENT THAT BEGIN AND HIS POLITICAL CONSTITUENCY WANT A NEGOTIATED PEACE IN ANY MEANINGFUL SENSE, BECAUSE KING BELIEVES BEGIN IS WILLING TO RISK CONTINUED ARAB HOSTILITY RATHER THAN CEDE NEARLY ALL THE TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL IN THE 1967 WAR.

3. U. S. PERFORMANCE: SIMILARLY, KING'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH

U. S. PERFORMANCE OVER PAST ELEVEN YEARS IN REALIZING
RESOLUTION 242 HAS INCREASED IN RECENT MONTHS, PARTICULARLY
FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF BEGIN PLAN, AND WILLINGNESS OF
U. S. TO CONSIDER IT AS A USEFUL STARTING POINT FOR
NEGOTIATIONS. GIVEN NEGATIVE JORDANIAN ASSESSMENT OF
ISRAELI INTENTIONS, BEGIN WEST BANK SELF-RULE PLAN, WITH
ITS PREMISE SEPARATING QUESTION OF WEST BANK LAND FROM WEST
BANK POPULATION AND PUTTING OFF FINAL DETERMINATION OF

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SOVEREIGNTY, IS VIEWED AS A CLEVER ISRAELI DEVICE TO AVOID
WITHDRAWAL IN ANY SIGNIFICANT SENSE, AND PERMITS NO REAL
CHANGE FROM THE STATUS QUO ON THE WEST BANK. A RELATED
POINT KING HUSSEIN AND THE GOJ HAVE BEEN MAKING TO US
LATELY IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN "EROSION" IN THE U. S.
POSITION SINCE HIGH POINTS MARKED BY CLINTON SPEECH ON THE
PALESTINIAN HOMELAND, THE JOINT U. S./SOVIET COMMUNIQUE,
AND THE ASWAN DECLARATION.

4. EGYPTIAN INTENTIONS: JORDANIANS (LIKE OTHER ARABS) SEEM
MUCH MORE ASSURED NOW THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE BEGINNING OF
SADAT INITIATIVE THAT SADAT WILL NOT ACCEPT A SEPARATE
AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL OR BE DRAWN INTO ITS TACTICAL EQUIV-
ALENT, THE "PERMANENT PARTIAL PEACE" IN SINAI NOW SUGGESTED
BY ISRAELIS. NEVERTHELESS, SADAT HAS STRONG REPUTATION
HERE FOR UNPREDICTABILITY, AND WE ASSUME JORDANIANS WILL
CONTINUE TO MAKE THE POINT TO SADAT BEFORE CAMP DAVID THAT
A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE ONE. ANY
INDICATIONS AT SUMMIT OF SOFTENING OF EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE

TOWARDS A SEPARATE PEACE WOULD CAUSE A SHARP NEGATIVE REACTION HERE.

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5. AN UNDERLYING, IF NOT ARTICULATED, JORDANIAN WORRY ABOUT SUMMIT IS THAT SADAT, POSSIBLY UNDER U. S. PRESSURE, WILL MAKE UNACCEPTABLE CONCESSIONS ON WEST BANK ISSUES WHICH WILL EITHER FORCE JORDAN, FOR DOMESTIC AND INTER-ARAB REASONS, TO STAY OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS OR ELSE MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR JORDAN TO ENTER AT A LATER STAGE. IN PARTICULAR WE BELIEVE ANY EGYPTIAN MOVES COMMITTING JORDAN TO A "CONDOMINIUM" RELATIONSHIP OR A SECURITY ROLE ON THE WEST BANK, PARTICULARLY ALONGSIDE ISRAELI FORCES, WOULD BE STRONGLY RESENTED. THIS ANXIETY IS NOT, HOWEVER, SUFFICIENTLY STRONG AT THIS POINT TO PUSH JORDAN INTO WANTING TO NEGOTIATE THESE ISSUES ITSELF, ABSENT A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH ON THE ISRAELI POSITION ON THE WEST BANK AND PALESTINIAN ISSUES.

6. INTER-ARAB CONSTRAINTS: JORDANIAN VIEW IS THAT ANY SUBSTANTIVE ARGUMENT WHICH WOULD PERSUADE THEM TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS WILL ALSO GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS CONVINCING ALL THE MODERATE ARABS TO SUPPORT THEIR INVOLVEMENT, PARTICULARLY THE SAUDIS (WHOSE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS NOW ESSENTIAL TO JORDAN). SUCH AN ARGUMENT MIGHT EVEN BE SUFFICIENT TO ACHIEVE THE GRUDGING ACQUIESCEANCE OF SYRIA. THE PLO REPRESENTATION ISSUE WILL BE A SPECIAL INTER-ARAB PROBLEM, BUT WE DO NOT SEE IT AS INSUPERABLE IF THERE IS ISRAELI MOVEMENT ON THE MAJOR ISSUES.

7. NEGOTIATIONS: JORDANIANS ARE CONCERNED THAT SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS MAY BE TEMPTED, GIVEN THE DIFFICULTY OF ACHIEVING POSITIVE RESULTS, TO MAKE A PLAY FOR JORDAN TO JOIN PEACE TALKS IN ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL PROGRESS ON WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN ISSUES -- SUCH A MOVE BEING PRESENTED TO JORDANIANS AS ADDING A NECESSARY NEW PROCEDURAL ELEMENT DESIGNED TO BUY TIME AND SHORE UP THE SADAT INITIATIVE WHILE THE PROCESS OF FERMENT IN ISRAEL (WHICH

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JORDANIANS QUESTION) AND IN THE U. S. CONTINUES. JORDAN WOULD BE EXTREMELY SKEPTICAL OF SUCH ARGUMENTS SINCE IN THEIR VIEW THE INVOLVEMENT OF JORDAN PREMATURELY IN NEGOTIATIONS WOULD DESTROY KING'S CREDIBILITY WITH EVEN MODERATE ARABS AND POSSIBLY EVEN UNDERMINE HIS REGIME. JORDANIANS THEREFORE WILL LOOK WITH A JEWELER'S EYE AT ANY

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON WEST BANK/GAZA WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION ISSUES TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT SUCH A DECLARATION(AND ACCOMPANYING ASSURANCES FROM U. S. AND OTHERS) WILL HAVE A DEMONSTRABLE(NOT JUST RHETORICAL) PROMISE OF ACTUALLY ACHIEVING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, AS WELL AS BRINGING ABOUT A VIABLE POLITICAL SITUATION DN WEST BANK INVOLVING SOME FORM OF PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION.

8. KING WILL BE EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO AVOID HAVING SUMMIT OUTCOME FORCE JORDAN INTO A "NO-WIN" NEGOTIATING SITUATION ON WEST BANK, OR ONE THAT COULD FREE SADAT TO CONCENTRATE ON SINAI AND OTHER BILATERAL PEACE ISSUES. KING'S POSITION THAT (UNDESIGNATED) PALESTINIANS MUST BE ENGAGED WITH JORDAN IN ANY WEST BANK NEGOTIATIONS FROM THE OUTSET IS ONE WAY JORDAN HAS CHOSEN TO INSURE IT IS NOT LEFT HOLDING THE BAG IN WEST BANK NEGOTIATIONS. JORDANIAN DESIRE NOT TO NEGLECT SYRIA AS POTENTIAL NEGOTIATOR, AND KING'S ATTEMPTS TO PROMOTE ARAB UNITY ARE ALSO PROBABLY INSURANCE AGAINST RISKY JORDANIAN EXPOSURE IN WEST BANK NEGOTIATIONS, PARTICULARLY TO ATTACKS BY PLO AND ITS BACKERS THAT U. S., ISRAEL AND JORDAN ARE CONSPIRING TO DEPRIVE PALESTINIANS OF "LEGITIMATE RIGHTS."

9. INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS: THE KING ALSO HAS LOYALIST DOMESTIC POLITICAL RESTRAINTS WHICH ARE BEGINNING TO COME TO THE FORE. IN PERIOD SINCE RABAT SUMMIT, EAST BANK AND

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

ARMY ELEMENTS, WHO ARE PRIMARY BULWARK OF REGIME, HAVE FOUND JORDANIAN NON-INVOLVEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS AN EXTREMELY

AGREEABLE SITUATION. JORDAN HAS PROSPERED AS A RESULT OF ITS RABAT SUMMIT DECISION TO ABANDON ITS WEST BANK NEGOTIATING ROLE. DIPLOMATICALLY, IT HAS IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH SYRIA, KUWAIT, SAUDI ARABIA AND ARABS IN GENERAL. GOJ STAND ALSO ALLOWED RELEASE OF LARGE AMOUNTS OF ARAB AID (NOW DIMINISHED) AS WELL AS OVER \$500 MILLION YEARLY IN REMITTANCES AND PRIVATE INVESTMENTS FOR JORDAN FROM THE JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN WORKERS IN THE OIL-RICH COUNTRIES. JORDAN PROBABLY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE U. S. IS IN ANY POSITION TO REPLACE THESE ECONOMIC INPUTS, SOME OF WHICH MIGHT DRY UP IF JORDAN WERE TO ADOPT POSITIONS ON THE MID-EAST ISSUE WHICH INCURRED THE DISAPPROVAL OF THE MAIN-STREAM OF MOBIVDATE ARAB OPINION, PARTICULARLY FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND THE MODERATE SECTOR OF THE OVERSEAS PALESTINIAN POPULATION.

10. WE HAVE RECENT PLAUSIBLE REPORTS INDICATING THAT EAST BANKER PRIME MINISTER BADRAN WOULD WISH TO STEP DOWN IF JORDAN JOINS NEGOTIATIONS, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THAT EVEN ARMED FORCES COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL BIN SHAKER MIGHT
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CONSIDER DOING SO. WE DOUBT THE LIKELIHOOD THAT INTENSELY LOYAL BIN SHAKER WOULD RESIGN, OR THAT BADRAN WOULD MAKE A POLITICAL ISSUE OF HIS RESIGNATION, BUT THESE REPORTS ILLUSTRATE DEGREE OF INITIAL OPPOSITION THERE WOULD BE TO JORDANIAN RE-INVOLVEMENT IN WEST BANK, AND EVEN MORE SO, TO PLAYING A SECURITY ROLE IN THE WEST BANK. THESE POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE KING ARE REAL AND ANY IMPORTANT CHANGE IN JORDAN'S POSITION WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE TIME FOR DOMESTIC MANEUVERING BY KING. CONSULTATION WITH THE CABINET, THE ARMY AND THE NEW CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL WOULD BE REQUIRED AND KING WOULD HAVE TO PRESENT A CONVINCING CASE. IN DOING SO HE WOULD BE HANDICAPPED BY JORDANIAN PUBLIC'S IGNORANCE OF THE SUBTLETIES OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING PROCESS, BY ITS CONDITIONING TOWARDS A STATIC RATHER THAN DYNAMIC CONCEPT OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND BY THE GENERAL SUSPICION OF INTERIM SOLUTIONS.

11. EAST BANK PALESTINIANS: HALF OF JORDAN IS PALESTINIAN IN ORIGIN AND MANY OF ITS MOST DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS ARE ORIGINALLY FROM JERUSALEM, SO IN ADDITION TO KING'S OWN SINCERE BELIEFS, THESE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTORS MUST BE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT IN FORMULATING HIS POSITION. ON ONE HAND, THESE FACTORS HELP KING IN PERSUADING HIS EAST BANK SUPPORTERS TO ACQUIESCE IN JORDAN'S RE-INVOLVEMENT BUT THEY VERY SEVERELY LIMIT HIS ABILITY TO MAKE CONCESSIONS ON TERRITORY OR SOVEREIGNTY IN WEST BANK AND EAST JERUSALEM. THERE IS PALPABLE PUBLIC REPUGNANCE TO ANY IDEA OF A "TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE" ON WEST BANK. (THE MODERATES

CONSIDER THEIR TERRITORIAL CONCESSION TO HAVE ALREADY BEEN
MADE IN ACCEPTING EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL WITHIN PRE-1967
BORDERS). THEY ALSO OPPOSE THE IDEA OF PERMITTING CONTIN-
UATION OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AND OF ISRAELI BUYING OF LAND
IN WEST BANK. WE CONSIDER IT POSSIBLE THAT JORDAN MIGHT

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HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY ON THESE ISSUES IN AN ACTUAL
NEGOTIATION OVER "MINOR AND RECIPROCAL BORDER MODIFICA-
TIONS."

12. TIMING AND PERSUASION CRUCIAL: IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO
SELL LOCALLY JORDAN'S ENTRY INTO NEGOTIATIONS; THE ASTUTE
DOMESTIC POLITICAL INSTINCTS OF KING HUSSEIN WOULD GUIDE
HIS TIMING AND MOVEMENT IN THIS RESPECT. HIS REQUIRED
TRUMP CARD IN PERSUADING BOTH JORDANIANS AND MODERATE ARABS
WOULD OF COURSE BE A DEMONSTRABLE PROMISE OF ACHIEVING
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON WEST BANK.

13. JORDAN'S HISTORICAL ROLE: DESPITE KING'S GENERAL
PESSIMISM REGARDING ISRAELI ATTITUDES, AND DOMESTIC AND
ARAB CONSTRAINTS ON JORDAN, WE BELIEVE HE IS STILL ANXIOUS
TO HAVE A DECISIVE HISTORICAL PLACE IN THE MIDEAST PROBLEM,
AND UNDERSTANDS THAT AT SOME POINT AN "ACT OF COURAGE" MAY
BE REQUIRED ON HIS PART. MORE THAN MANY EAST BANKERS, HE
SEES HIS AND JORDAN'S "PLACE IN THE SUN" AS DEPENDENT ON
CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT IN THIS GLOBAL ISSUE. HE IS
ATTRACTED TO IDEA OF PLAYING A ROLE AT APPROPRIATE TIME AND
RETAINS ENOUGH OF HIS OLD PLUCK AND ADVENTURISM TO BE OPEN
TO PLAUSIBLE SUGGESTIONS. HE ALSO RECOGNIZES MIDEAST
SITUATION WILL NOT STAND STILL WITHOUT GOING BACKWARDS AT
THIS POINT, SO WE CAN EXPECT JORDAN TO TRY TO FIND WAYS
FOLLOWING CAMP DAVID TO KEEP PEACE MOMENTUM. SPECIFICALLY,
WE BELIEVE JORDANIANS WOULD TRY TO HELP INSURE THAT CAMP
DAVID HAD A PROCEDURAL "SAFETY NET"(POSSIBLY INVOLVING
MOVEMENT TO THE U. N. OR A GENEVA CONFERENCE) IF IT DID NOT
ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH. THIS WOULD ALLOW SADAT TO QUIETLY
END HIS INITIATIVE WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL INTERNALLY OR
ALLOWING THE AREA SITUATION TO DRIFT TOWARDS WAR.

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

14. WHILE JORDANIANS WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO SEE A CONTINUING PRIMARY U. S. ROLE, THEY PROBABLY VIEW THIS ROLE AS THREATENED IF THE U. S. POSITION AT SUMMIT DOES NOT EITHER SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE OR CONFRONT THE ISRAELI POSITION. AT LEAST, JORDANIANS WOULD PROBABLY WELCOME A FORTHCOMING PUBLIC U. S. POSITION ON THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON WEST BANK/GAZA AND FOR PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION, AS WELL AS ANY EVIDENCE CAMP DAVID WAS SERVING TO ADVANCE ARAB NEGOTIATING INTERESTS IN U. S. DOMESTIC TERMS. NEVERTHELESS, WITHOUT SOME PERSUASIVE MOVEMENT IN THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES (ON AT LEAST THE ISRAELI WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL ISSUE), WE WILL HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN BRINGING JORDAN TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. IN FINAL ANALYSIS, KING WILL PROBABLY BASE HIS ULTIMATE DECISION ON HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL STRATEGIC SITUATION FOLLOWING CAMP DAVID, PARTICULARLY ON THE U. S. POSITION AND THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESOLVE AND PERCEIVED ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES IN THE PRESENT U. S. DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. SUDDARTH

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